

## REPORT.

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The select Committee to which was recommitted the bill relative to the House of Refuge, having had the same under consideration as also that portion of the Message of the Executive, relating thereto, respectfully submit the following report :

If there be one cause which more than another should excite the sympathies and care of those who seek to promote the public welfare, it is that of the unfortunate, the friendless, the uncared for youth of our State. It is vain to boast of the intelligence and virtue of our people, and their capacity to perform their duty to the Government, when the moral and mental training of so large a portion of our population remains totally unprovided for, and their career in the course of crime remains unchecked—when hundreds of children, boys and girls, wander in the paths of vice, and through beggary, theft and personal desecration, gather together merely sufficient to enable them to provide the means of spending their time in dissipation and revelry. When we look through our State, what do we now witness in relation to this large and fearfully increasing class of offenders? Many are sent to our prisons, and there associate with the old and hardened convict, and soon learning the mysteries of a life of infamy, from those whose years are steeped in guilt; they become the murderers and burglars of our land; or if perchance their tender age awake a sympathy in the minds of a jury; or, as is often the case, the sufferer by their depredations, through a false charity, interposes between the offender and the law, in hope of a future reformation, they are permitted to go unpunished, and the designs of the law be thwarted; we in a few years are called upon to record the feats of the daring robber, and the successful efforts of the midnight incendiary.

States, like individuals, are responsible in the eyes of God for their actions. It is the duty of the State to foster and encourage virtue, and to protect her offspring. Although the parent is enjoined by divine precept to "train up a child in the way he should go," it is no less true that when the parental obligation is avoided by those in whose hands God has entrusted their offspring, the government should endeavor to reclaim the child from misery, rather than permit him to pursue a life of degradation, and